



NEWS RELEASE

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Greenville Among 12 Cities Nationwide Selected for Project to Improve Early Childhood Outcomes

Greenville, SC ... The City of Greenville was recently chosen by the National League of Cities (NLC) to participate in an exciting project promoting early childhood development within communities. This program, called the *Freddie Mac Foundation Early Childhood Challenge*, is funded by the Freddie Mac Foundation. With assistance from NLC's Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute), participating cities will create multi-phase strategies to improve the quality of life for young children.

Greenville's strong and positive response to NLC's 2003 City Challenge for Early Childhood Success secured its place among the nation's top 12, as did its hard work towards improving early care and education.

"Municipal leaders play a vital role in supporting our youngest citizens. This project will help city officials create targeted plans that improve outcomes for young children in their communities," said Clifford Johnson, executive director of the YEF Institute.

The selected cities include: Columbus, Ohio; Fort Worth, Tex.; Greenville, S.C.; Hamden, Conn.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Jackson, Miss.; Kokomo, Ind.; Mansfield, Conn.; Northglenn, Colo.; Ralston, Neb.; St. Louis, Mo.; and Tulsa, Okla.

Together with NLC, each of the chosen cities will work to create and put into action a plan which will ensure the best quality of life possible for its local youth. Areas to be focused on will include parent education, health and safety, quality child care, and school readiness. The cities will receive assistance from the YEF Institute and have access to related resources and expertise along with shared informational materials.

Vice Mayor Pro Tem Diane Smock first learned of the NLC project when she attended a national forum on early childhood education last year and she's pleased that Greenville was chosen for the NLC project. She says, "City Council is excited to be working in partnership with early childhood experts to launch this new initiative. It gives us an opportunity to better serve our youngest citizens and in turn help ensure a better future for them, for their families and for our community."

Strengthening America through stronger cities, towns, and villages, the National League of Cities is the oldest and largest national organization for American cities. NLC serves as a resource and advocate for 18,000 cities, towns, and villages which collectively serve 225 million people. Visit www.nlc.org.

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